

Date: May 5, 2017 (updated information from 5/1/17 memo)

To: Authorized Representatives of School Food Authorities (SFAs) Participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs

From: Jessica Sharkus, RD, CD
Director-School Nutrition Team (SNT)

Subject: Updates to the Web-based Direct Certification Program to include Medicaid and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) Data

Please forward to staff that are responsible for running Direct Certification

The Department of Public Instruction SNT applied for and has been awarded the opportunity to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) demonstration project to evaluate direct certification for free and reduced price school meals using Medicaid data for school year (SY) 2017-18. Medicaid data will be used to directly certify students for both **free and reduced price** meal eligibility.

School enrollment data will be matched with Medicaid eligibility data to identify children who receive Medicaid, or live with a child who receives Medicaid, and whose family income, before expenses and deductions, does not exceed:

- 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for free school meal eligibility; or
- 185 percent of the FPL for reduced price meal eligibility.

Eligible children identified through this matching process can be certified automatically to receive free or reduced price school meal benefits, without requiring the household to submit an application. Students that match with a “Z” code and qualify for reduced price benefits through direct certification extend benefits to other members of the same household.

As part of this demonstration project, the SNT will be measuring whether there are increases in direct certification rates.

Also, new for SY 2017-18, students that participate in FDPIR will automatically qualify to receive free meals. Participant data from FDPIR agencies identifying members of households receiving assistance under FDPIR will be included in the direct certification process.

The SNT is working with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), Covering Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to upgrade the web-based direct certification system to allow for Medicaid and FDPIR data.

New Direct Certification Eligibility Codes

As a result of adding additional eligibility data to the direct certification program, there will be three new codes added to the direct certification eligibility codes:

M – Student is identified by the state’s Medicaid database and is automatically eligible for free meals.

Z – Student is identified by the state’s Medicaid database and is automatically eligible for reduced price meals.

G – Student is identified by a FDPIR list provided by participating Native American tribes and is automatically eligible for free meals.

There is no change to how direct certification is completed or how the input file is set up as a result of these enhancements. More information on the direct certification process, file formatting and eligibility codes is located on the SNT [direct certification](#) webpage.

Questions/Concerns

For issues related to accessing and implementing the changes or any other questions regarding direct certification, please contact the SNT at dpifns@dpi.wi.gov or (608) 267-9228.

If a student database software company formats your files for direct certification, please work with them to ensure they have completed the software updates. Enclosed is an additional memo for you to share with your software company providing details on the updates. All updates should be completed by June 30, 2017.